

Remarks and Arguments:

Upon entry of the instant amendment claims 1-6, 8-9, 12-16 and 19-23 are pending. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as not showing every feature of the invention specified in reference to claims 3, 12 and 20. Claim 8 stands objected to because of the word “ring”. All claims stand rejected under 35 USC s 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee (U.S. Patent No. 6,655,851) in view of Schlage et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,028,917).

In response to the Examiner’s objections to the drawings, Applicants have amended claims 3, 12 and 20. The claims now recite “one pair of keyways extending from one side of the passageway to the opposite side, in accordance with the Examiner’s language in Section 2 of the Office Action. Accordingly, the Examiner’s objections should be obviated.

As for claim 8, Applicants have removed the word “ring” from claim 8, line 9, as suggested by the Examiner. Also, in claim 1 the word “whereby” has been changed to “wherein”.

With respect to the Examiner’s 35 USC s 103(a) rejection, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended are not suggested, taught or implied by the Schlage reference. In particular, claims 1, 8 and 16 have been amended to recite, *inter alia*, “, the partial key ring configured to enable the plug to be inserted only at a predetermined angle of rotation.” Thus, it can be seen that the partial key ring is used to determine the orientation in which a plug may be inserted into the keyway. In contrast, Schlage shows a partial ring, but that partial ring has nothing to do with the position in which the key is inserted or held in place.


Finally, Applicants are unsure of the Examiner’s point in section 8 of the Office Action, stating that the partial key ring is not a critical part of the invention. As the Examiner is undoubtedly aware, an element of a claim does not necessarily have to be a “critical part of the invention to be patentable.” The patent statutes do not require such.

In light of the above arguments, Applicants respectfully submit that the final rejection be withdrawn and that the instant case is in condition for allowance, which allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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